{See Note at end.}

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THE SYMPATHY OF RELIGIONS.

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Our true religious life begins when we discover that there is an Inner Light, not infallible but invaluable, which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Then we have something to steer by; and it is chiefly this, and not an anchor, that we need. The human soul, like any other noble vessel, was not built to be anchored, but to sail. An anchorage may, indeed, be at times a temporary need, in order to make some special repairs, or to take fresh cargo in; yet the natural destiny of both ship and soul is not the harbor, but the ocean.

And as with individuals, so with communities. The great historic religions of the world are not so many stranded hulks left to perish. The most conspicuous among them are yet full of life and activity. All over the world the divine influence moves men. There is a sympathy in religions, and this sympathy is shown alike in their origin, their records, and their career. I have worshipped in an Evangelical church when thousands rose to their feet at the motion of one hand. I have worshipped in a Roman Catholic church when the lifting of one finger broke the motionless multitude into twinkling motion, till the magic sign was made, and all was still. But I never for an instant have supposed that this concentrated moment of devotion was more holy or more beautiful than when one cry from a minaret hushes a Mohammedan city to prayer; or when, at sunset, the low invocation, "Oh! the gem in the lotus — oh! the gem in the lotus," goes murmuring, like the cooing of many doves, across the vast surface of Thibet. True, "the gem in the lotus" means nothing to us, but it has for those who use it a meaning as significant as "the Lamb of God," for it is a symbol of aspiration.

Every year brings new knowledge of the religions of the world, and every step in knowledge brings out the sympathy between them. They all show similar aims, symbols, forms, weaknesses, and aspirations. Looking at these points of unity, we might say that under many forms there is but one religion, whose essential creed is the Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Man,— disguised by corruptions, symbolized by mythologies, ennobled by virtues, degraded by vices, but still the same.

God One, with Many Names.

"Amid so much war and contest and variety of opinion," said Maximus Tyrius, "you will find one consenting conviction

in every land, that there is one God, the King and Father of all." "God being one," said Aristotle, "only receives various names from the various manifestations we perceive." "Sovereign God," said Cleanthes, in that sublime prayer which Paul quoted, "whom men invoke under many names, and who rulest alone,.....it is to thee that all nations should address themselves, for we all are thy children." "It is of little consequence," says Seneca, "by what name you call the first Nature, the divine Reason that presides over the universe and fills all parts of it. He is still the same God. We Stoics sometimes call him Father Bacchus, because he is the Universal Life that animates Nature; sometimes Mercury, because he is the Eternal Reason, Order and Wisdom. You may give him as many names as you please, provided you allow but one sole principle universally." St. Augustine readily accepts these interpretations. "It was one God," he says, "the universal Creator and Sustainer, who in the ethereal spaces was called Jupiter; in the sea, Neptune; in the sun, Phœbus; in the fire, Vulcan; in the vintage, Bacchus; in the harvest, Ceres; in the forests, Diana; in the sciences, Minerva." So Origen, the Christian Father, frankly says that no man can be blamed for calling God's name in Egyptian, or in Scythian, or in such other language as he best knows.

To say that different races worship different Gods, is like saying that they are warmed by different suns. The names differ, but the sun is the same, and so is God. As there is but one source of light and warmth, so there is but one source of religion. To this all nations testify alike. We have yet but a part of our Holy Bible. The time will come when, as in the middle ages, all pious books will be called sacred scriptures, *Scripturæ Sacræ*. From the most remote portions of the earth, from the Vedas and the Sagas, from Plato and Zoroaster, Confucius and Mohammed, from the Emperor Marcus Antoninus and the slave Epictetus, from learned Alexandrians and the ignorant Galla negroes, there will be gathered hymns and prayers and maxims in which every religious soul may unite,—the magnificent liturgy of the human race.

A Formula for all Religions.

Alexander Von Humboldt asserted in middle life, and repeated the assertion in old age, that "all positive religions contain three distinct parts. First, a code of morals, very fine, and nearly the same in all. Second, a geological dream, and, third, a myth or historical novelette, which last becomes the most important of all." And though this observation may be somewhat roughly stated, its essential truth is seen when we compare the different religions of the world, side by side. With such startling points of similarity, where is the difference? The main difference lies here, that each fills some blank space in its creed with the name of a different teacher. For instance, the oriental Parsee wears a fine white garment, bound around him with a certain knot; and whenever this knot is undone, at morning or night, he repeats the four main points of his creed, which are as follows:

"To believe in one God, and hope for mercy from him only."

"To believe in a future state of existence."

"To do as you would be done by."

Thus far the Parsee keeps on the universal ground of religion. Then he drops into the language of his sect, and adds:

"To believe in Zoroaster as lawgiver, and to hold his writings sacred."

The creed thus furnishes a formula for all faiths. It might be printed in blank like a circular, leaving only the closing name to be filled in. For Zoroaster read Christ, and you have Christianity; read Buddha, and you have Buddhism; read Mohammed, and you have Mohammedanism. Each of these, in short, is Natural Religion *plus* an individual name. It is by insisting on that *plus* that each religion stops short of being universal.

Common Rituals, Symbols, etc.

In this religion of the human race, thus variously disguised, we meet constantly the same leading features. The same religious institutions,—monks, missionaries, priests, and pilgrims. The same ritual,—prayers, liturgies, sacrifices, sermons, hymns. The same implements,—frankincense, candles, holy water, relics,

amulets, votive offerings. The same symbols,—the cross, the ball, the triangle, the serpent, the all-seeing eye, the halo of rays, the tree of life. The same saints, angels, and martyrs. The same holiness attached to particular cities, rivers, and mountains. The same prophecies and miracles, — the dead restored and evil spirits cast out. The self-same holy days; for Easter and Christmas were kept as spring and autumn festivals, centuries before our era, by Egyptians, Persians, Saxons, Romans. The same artistic designs; for the mother and child stand depicted, not only in the temples of Europe, but in those of Etruria and Arabia, Egypt and Thibet. In ancient Christian art, the evangelists were represented as bearing the heads of birds and quadrupeds, like those upon which we gaze with amazement in Egyptian tombs. Nay, the very sects and subdivisions of all historic religions have been the same, and each supplies us with mystic and rationalist, formalist and philanthropist, ascetic and epicurean. The simple fact is, that all these things are as indigenous as grass and mosses; they spring up in every soil, and often the microscope alone can distinguish the varieties.

Common Doctrines: Incarnation, etc.

The same great doctrines, also, good or bad, are seen:— regeneration, predestination, atonement, the future life, the final judgment, the Divine Reason or Logos, and the Trinity. And, as all these inevitably recur, so comes back again and again the idea of incarnation,—the Divine Man. Here, too, all religions sympathize, and, with slight modifications, each is the copy of the other. As in the dim robing-rooms of foreign churches are kept rich stores of sacred vestments, ready to be thrown over every successive generation of priests, so the world has kept in memory the same stately traditions to decorate each new Messiah. He is predicted by prophecy, hailed by sages, born of a virgin, attended by miracle, borne to heaven without tasting death, and with promise of return. Zoroaster and Confucius have no human father. Osiris is the Son of God; he is called the Revealer of Life and Light; he first teaches one chosen race; he then goes with his apostles to teach the Gentiles, conquering the world by peace; he is slain by evil powers; after death he descends into hell, then rises again, and presides at the last judgment of all mankind: those who call upon his name shall be saved. Buddha is born of a virgin; his name means the Word, the Logos, but he is known more tenderly as the Saviour of Man; he embarrasses his teachers, when a child, by his understanding and his answers; he is tempted in the wilderness, when older; he goes with his apostles to redeem the world; he abolishes caste and cruelty, and teaches forgiveness; he receives among his followers outcasts whom Pharisaic pride despises, and he says, "My law is a law of mercy to all." These are the recognized properties of religious tradition; the beautiful garments belong not to the individual, but the race. It is the drawback on all human greatness that it makes itself deified. Even of Jesus it was said sincerely by the Platonic philosopher Porphyry, "That noble soul, who has ascended into heaven, has by a certain fatality become an occasion of error." The inequality of gifts is a problem not yet solved, and there is always a craving for some miracle to explain it. Men set up their sublime representatives as so many spiritual athletes, and measure them. "See, this one is six inches taller; those six inches prove him divine." But because men surpass us, or surpass everybody, shall we hold them separate from the race? Construct the race as you will, somebody must stand at the head, in virtue as in intellect. Shall we deify Shakespeare? Are we to raise him to the heavens, as in the magnificent eulogium of Keats, who heads creation with "things real, as sun, stars, and passages of Shakespeare"? Or are we to erect into a creed the bold words I once heard an enthusiast soberly say, "that it is impossible to think of Shakespeare as a man"? Or shall we reverently own that, as man's humility first bids him separate himself from these his great superiors, so his faith and hope bring him back to them and renew the tie. It paralyzes my intellect if I doubt whether Shakespeare was a man; it paralyzes my whole spiritual nature if I doubt whether Jesus was.

God: Brotherhood of Man: The Golden Rule.

Therefore I believe that all religion is natural, all revealed. What faith in humanity springs up, what trust in God, when one recognizes the sympathy of religions! Every race has some conception of a Creator and Governor of the world, in whom devout souls recognize a Father also. Even where, as among the Buddhists, the reported teachings of the founder seem to ignore the existence of a Deity, the popular instinct is too strong for the teacher, so that the Buddhist races are not atheistic. Every race has some conception of an existence after death. Every race in some way recognizes by its religious precepts the brotherhood of man. The whole gigantic system of caste in Hindostan has grown up in defiance of the Vedas, which are now being invoked to abolish it. The Hitopadesa of Vishnu Sarman forbids caste. "Is this one of our tribe or a stranger? is the calculation of the narrow-minded: but, to those of a noble disposition, the earth itself is but one family." "What is religion?" says elsewhere the same book; and answers, "Tenderness toward all creatures." "He is my beloved of whom mankind are not afraid and who of mankind is not afraid," says the Bhagvat Geeta. "Kesava is pleased with him who does good to others,.....who is always desirous of the welfare of all creatures," says the Vishnu Purana. The traditional greeting of the Buddhist Tartars is, "All men are brethren, and should help one another." When a disciple asked Confucius about benevolence, he said, "It is to love *all* men;" and he elsewhere said, "My doctrine is simple and easy to understand;" and his chief disciple adds, "It consists only in having the heart right and in loving one's neighbor as one's self." When he was asked, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" he answered, "Is not 'Reciprocity' such a word? What you wish done to yourself, do to others." By some translators the rule is given in a negative form, in which it is also found in the Jewish Talmud (Rabbi Hillel), "Do not to another what thou wouldst not he should do to thee; this is the sum of the law." So Thales, when asked for a rule of life, taught, "That which thou blamest in another, do not thyself." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," said the Hebrew book of Leviticus. "None of you can be called a true believer," says the Koran, "till he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." Iamblichus tells us that Pythagoras taught "the love of all to all," and Plutarch that Zeno taught us "to look upon all men in general to be our fellow-countrymen and citizens..... like a flock feeding together with equal right in a common pasture." "To live is not to live for one's self alone," said the Greek dramatist Menander; and the Roman dramatist Terence, following him, brought down the applause of the whole theater by the saying, "I am a man; I count nothing human foreign to me." "Give bread to a stranger," said Quintilian, "in the name of the universal brotherhood which binds together all men under the common father of nature." "What good man will look on any suffering as foreign to himself?" said the Latin satirist Juvenal. "This sympathy is what distinguishes us from brutes," he adds. Plutarch consoles Apollonius for the death of his son by praising the youth as "a lover of mankind." The poet Lucan predicted a time when warlike weapons should be laid aside, and all men love one another. "Nature has inclined us to love men," said Cicero, "and this is the foundation of the law." He also described his favorite virtue of justice as "devoting itself wholly to the good of others." "Love mankind," wrote Marcus Antoninus, summing it all up in two words; while the loving soul of Epictetus extended the sphere of mutual affection beyond this earth, holding that "the universe is but one great city, full of beloved ones, divine and human, by nature endeared to each other."

Forgiveness of Enemies.

This sympathy of religions extends even to the loftiest virtues,—the forgiveness of injuries, the love of enemies, and the overcoming of evil with good. "It is declared in our Ved and Codes of Law," says Ram Mohun Roy, "that mercy is the root of virtue." Buddha said, "A man who foolishly does me wrong, I will

return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me." "Hatred," says the Buddhist Dhammapada, or *Path of Virtue*, "does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love; this is an old rule." "To overwhelm evil with good is good, and to resist evil by evil is evil," says a Mohammedan manual of ethics. "Turn not away from a sinner, but look on him with compassion," says Sadi's Gulistan. "If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat; if he thirst, give him water to drink," said the Hebrew proverb. "He who commits injustice is ever made more wretched than he who suffers it," said Plato, and adds, "It is never right to return an injury." "No one will dare maintain," said Aristotle, "that it is better to do injustice than to bear it." "We should do good to our enemy," said Cleobulus, "and make him our friend." "Speak not evil to a friend, nor even to an enemy," said Pittacus, one of the Seven Wise Men. "It is more beautiful," said Valerius Maximus, "to overcome injury by the power of kindness than to oppose to it the obstinacy of hatred." Maximus Tyrius has a special chapter on the treatment of injuries, and concludes, "If he who injures does wrong, he who returns the injury does equally wrong." Plutarch, in his essay, "How to profit by our enemies," bids us sympathize with them in affliction and aid their needs." "A philosopher, when smitten, must love those who smite him, as if he were the father, the brother, of all men," said Epictetus. "It is peculiar to man," said Marcus Antoninus, "to love even those who do wrong.....Ask thyself daily to how many ill-minded persons thou hast shown a kind disposition." He compares the wise and humane soul to a spring of pure water which blesses even him who curses it; as the Oriental story likens such a soul to the sandal-wood tree, which imparts its fragrance even to the axe that cuts it down.

Christians too slow to admit this Sympathy of Religions.

How it cheers and enlarges us to hear of these great thoughts and know that the Divine has never been without a witness on earth! How it must sadden the soul to disbelieve them! Worse yet, to be in a position where it is necessary to hope that they may not be correctly reported,—that one by one they may be explained away.

For this purpose the very facts of history must be suppressed. Sir George Mackenzie, in his Travels in Iceland, says that the clergy prevented till 1630, with "mistaken zeal," the publication of the Scandinavian Eddas. Huc, the Roman Catholic Missionary, described in such truthful colors the religious influence of Buddhism in Thibet that his book was put in the *index expurgatorius* at Rome. Balmes, a learned Roman Catholic writer, declares that "Christianity is stripped of a portion of its honors" if we trace back any high standard of female purity to the ancient Germans; and so he coolly sets aside as "poetical" the plain statements of the accurate Tacitus. If we are to believe the accounts given of the Jewish Essenes by Josephus, DeQuincey thinks, the claims made by Christianity are annihilated. "If Essenism could make good its pretensions, there, at one blow, would be an end of Christianity, which, in that case, is not only superseded as an idle repetition of a religious system already published, but as a criminal plagiarism. Nor can the wit of man evade the conclusion." He accordingly attempts to explain away the unequivocal testimony of Josephus.

And what makes this exclusiveness the more repulsive is its modern origin. Paul himself quoted from the sublime hymn of Cleanthes to prove to the Greeks that they too recognized the Fatherhood of God. The early Christian apologists, living face to face with the elder religions, made no exclusive claims. Tertullian declared the soul to be an older authority than prophecy, and its voice the gift of God from the beginning. Justin Martyr said, "Those who live according to Reason are Christians, though you may call them atheists. .....Such among the Greeks were Socrates and Heraclitus and the rest. They who have made or do make Reason (Logos) their rule of life are Christians, and men without fear and trembling." "The same God," said Clement, "to whom we

owe the Old and New Testaments gave also to the Greeks their Greek philosophy by which the Almighty is glorified among the Greeks." Lanctantius declared that the ancient philosophers "attained the full truth and the whole mystery of religion." "One would suppose," said Minucius Felix, "either that the Christians were philosophers, or the philosophers Christians." "What is now called the Christian religion," said Augustine, "has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came in the flesh; from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian." Jerome said that "the knowledge of God was present by nature in all, nor was there any one born without God, or who had not in himself the seeds of all virtues."

There is undoubtedly an increasing willingness among Christian theologians to express views like these. Some of the ablest Christian writers have honestly disclaimed any monopoly of the truth. In William Penn's "No Cross No Crown" one half the pages are devoted to the religious testimony of Christians, and one half to that of the non-Christian world. The pious Scougal, in his discourse "On the indispensable duty of loving our enemies," admits that it was taught also by "the more sober of the heathen." "If," says Dean Milman, "we were to glean from the later Jewish writings, from the beautiful aphorisms of other Oriental nations, which we cannot fairly trace to Christian sources, and from the Platonic and Stoic philosophy, their more striking precepts, we might find, perhaps, a counterpart to almost all the moral sayings of Jesus." Yet there are many who still shrink from the admission that any such sympathy exists between religions. "There never was a time," says a distinguished European preacher, "when there did not exist an infinite gulf between the ideas of the ancients and the ideas of Christianity. There is an end of Christianity if men agree in thinking the contrary." An eminent American clergyman says, "If the truths of Christianity are intuitive and self-evident, how is it that they formed no part of any man's consciousness till the advent of Christ? But how can any one look history in the face, how can any man open even the dictionary of any ancient language, and yet say this? What word sums up the highest Christian virtue if not *philanthropy?* And yet the word is a Greek word, and was used in the same sense before Christendom existed.

The Gospel of Buddhism.

And, if it is thus hard to do historical justice, it is far harder to look with fairness upon contemporary religions. Thus the Jesuit Father Ripa thought that Satan had created the Buddhist religion on purpose to bewilder the Christian church. There we see a creed possessing more votaries than any other in the world, numbering nearly one-third of the human race. Its traditions go back to a founder whose record is stainless and sublime. It has the doctrine of the Real Presence, the Madonna and Child, the invocation of the dead, monasteries and pilgrimages, celibacy and tonsure, relics, rosaries, and holy water. Wherever it has spread, it has broken down the barrier of caste. It teaches that all men are brethren, and makes them prove it by their acts; it diffuses gentleness and self-sacrificing benevolence. "It has become," as Neander admits, "to many tribes of people a means of transition from the wildest barbarism to semi-civilization." Tennent, living amid the lowest form of it in Ceylon, says that its code of morals is "second only to that of Christianity itself," and enjoins "every conceivable virtue and excellence." Shall we not rejoice in this consoling discovery? "Yes," said the simple-hearted Abbe Huc; so he published his account of Buddhism, and saw the book excommunicated. "No!" said Father Ripa, "it is the invention of the devil!"

The Gospel of Islam.

With a steady wave of progress Mohammedanism is sweeping through Africa, where Christianity scarcely advances a step. Wherever Mohammedanism reaches, schools and libraries are established, gambling and drunkenness cease, theft and falsehood diminish, polygamy is limited, woman begins to be elevated and has property rights guaranteed; and, instead

of witnessing human sacrifices, you see the cottager reading the Koran at her door, like the Christian cottager in Cowper's description. "Its gradual extension," says an eye-witness, "is gradually but surely modifying the negro.....Within the last half century the humanizing influence of the Koran is acknowledged by all who are acquainted with the interior tribes." So in India Mohammedanism makes converts by thousands, according to Colonel Sleeman, where Christianity makes but a handful; and this, he testifies, because in Mohammedanism there is no spirit of caste, while Christians have a caste of their own, and will not put converts on an equality with themselves. Do we rejoice in this great work of progress? No! one would think we were still in the time of the crusades by the way we ignore the providential value of Mohammedanism.

No Truth or Virtue the Monopoly of any Faith.

The one unpardonable sin is exclusiveness. Any form of religion is endangered when we bring it to the test of practical results; for none can yet bear that test. There never existed a person, a book, or an institution, which did not share, however distantly, the merits and the drawbacks of its rivals. Granting all that can be established as to the debt of the world to the very best dispensation, the fact still remains, that there is not a single maxim, or idea, or application, or triumph, that any one religion can claim as exclusively its own. Neither faith, nor love, nor truth, nor disinterestedness, nor forgiveness, nor patience, nor peace, nor equality, nor education, nor missionary effort, nor prayer, nor honesty, nor the sentiment of brotherhood, nor reverence for woman, nor the spirit of humanity, nor the fact of martyrdom, nor any other good thing is monopolized by any form of faith. All religions recognize, more or less remotely, these principles; all do something to exemplify, something to dishonor them. Travelers find that virtue is in a seeming minority in all other countries, and forget that they have left it in a minority at home. A Hindoo girl, astonished at the humanity of a British officer toward her father, declared her surprise that any one could display so much kindness who did not believe in the God Vishnu. Rev. J. R. Wolf, an English missionary, met a Buddhist who readily offered to believe in Jesus Christ if the missionary would believe in Buddha. Gladwin, in his "Persian Classics," narrates a scene which occurred in his presence between a Jew and a Mohammedan. The Mohammedan said in wrath, "If this deed of conveyance is not authentic, may God cause me to die a Jew." The Jew said, "I make my oath on the Pentateuch, and if I swear falsely I am a Mohammedan like you."

Christianity's Claim to Superiority Considered.

What religion stands highest in its moral results, if not Christianity? Yet Christendom has produced the slave-trader as well as the saint. If we say that Christendom was not truly represented by the slaves in the hold of John Newton's slave-ship, but only by his pious meditations in the cabin, then we must admit that Buddhism is not to be judged merely by its prostrations before Fo, but by the learning of its lamaseries and the beneficence of its people. Keshub Chunder Sen goes from India to England, and implores Christians to cease demoralizing the young Hindoos by teaching them the use of strong drink. "Man after man dies," he says, "and people sometimes compute the results of English education by the number of deaths that actually take place, every month and year, through intemperance." The greater humanity of Hindoos towards animals has been, according to Dr. Hedge, a serious embarrassment to our missionaries. Men interrupt the missionaries in China, Coffin tells us, by asking them why, if their doctrines are true, Christian nations forced opium on an unwilling emperor, who refused to the last to receive money from the traffic; and it is well known that Gutzlaff, a missionary, accompanied the English ships, as interpreter, on that occasion.

What a history has been our treatment of the American Indians! "Instead of virtues," said Cadwallader Colden, writing as early as 1727, "we have taught them

vices that they were entirely free from before that time." The delegation from the Society of Friends reported, in 1869, that an Indian chief brought a young Indian before a white commissioner to give evidence, and the commissioner hesitated a little in receiving a part of the testimony, when the chief said with great emphasis, "Oh! you may believe what he says; he tell the truth: he has never seen a white man before!" In Southey's Wesley there is an account of an Indian whom Wesley met in Georgia, and who thus summed up his objections to Christianity: "Christian much drunk! Christian beat man! Christian tells lies! Devil Christian! Me no Christian!" What then? All other religions show the same discrepancy between belief and practice, and each is safe till it begins to traduce the rest. Test each sect by its best or its worst as you will, by its high water-mark of virtue or its low water-mark of vice. But falsehood begins when you measure the ebb of any other religion against the flood-tide of your own.

There is a noble and a base side to every history. The same religion varies in different soils. Christianity is not the same in England and Italy; in Armenia and in Ethiopia; in the Protestant and Catholic cantons of Switzerland; in Massachusetts and in Utah. Neither is Buddhism the same in China, in Thibet and in Ceylon; nor Mohammedanism in Turkey and in Persia. We have no right to pluck the best fruit from one tree, the worst from another, and then say that the tree is known by its fruits. I say again, Christianity has, on the whole, produced the highest results of all, in manners, in arts, in virtue. Yet when Christianity had been five centuries in the world, the world's only hope seemed to be in the superior strength and purity of pagan races. "Can we wonder," wrote Salvian (A. D. 400), "if our lands have been given over to the barbarians by God? since that which we have polluted by our profligacy the barbarians have cleansed by their chastity." At the end of its first thousand years, Christianity could only show Europe at its lowest ebb of civilization, in a state which Guizot calls "death by the extinction of every faculty." The barbarians had only deteriorated since their conversion; the great empires were falling to pieces; and the only bright spot in Europe was Mohammedan Spain, whose universities taught all Christendom science, as its knights taught chivalry. Even at the end of fifteen hundred years, the Turks, having conquered successively Jerusalem and Constantinople, seemed altogether the most powerful nation of the world; their empire was compared to the Roman empire; they were gaining all the time. You will find everywhere—in Luther's "Table-talk," for instance—how weak Christendom seemed against them in the middle of the sixteenth century; and Lord Bacon, yet later, describes them in his "Essays" as the only warlike nation in Europe except the Spaniards. But the art of printing had been discovered, and that other new world, America; the study of Greek literature was reviving the intellect of Europe, and the tide had begun to turn. For four hundred years it has been safe for Christendom to be boastful, but, if at any time during the fifteen hundred years previous the comparison had been made, the boasting would have been the other way. It is unsafe to claim a monopoly of merit on the basis of facts that cover four centuries out of nineteen. Let us not be misled by a hasty vanity, lest some new incursion of barbarians teach us, as it taught the early Christians, to be humble.

We see what Christianity has done for Europe; but we do not remember how much Europe has done for Christianity. Take away the influence of race and climate; take away Greek literature and Mohammedan chivalry and the art of printing; set the decline of Christianity in Asia and Africa against its gain in Europe and America,—and, whatever superiority may be left, it affords no basis for any exclusive claims. The recent scientific advances of the age are a brilliant theme for the rhetorician; but those who make these advances appear very little disposed to ascribe them to the influence of any form of religion.

Indeed, it is only very lately that the claim of superiority in civilization and the arts of life has been made

in behalf of Christianity. Down to the time of the Reformation it was usual to contrast the intellectual and practical superiority of the heathen with the purely spiritual claims of the church. Ruskin complains that in Raphael's decorations of the Vatican he concedes Philosophy and Poetry to the ancients, and claims only Theology for the moderns. "From the beginning of the world," said Luther, "there have always been among the heathens higher and rarer people, of greater and more exalted understanding, more excellent diligence and skill in all arts, than among Christians, or the people of God." "Do we excel in intellect, in learning, in decency of morals?" said Melancthon. "By no means. But we excel in the true knowledge and worship and adoration of God." "The church has always been accustomed," says the Roman Catholic Digby, "to see genius and learning in the ranks opposed to her."

Historically, of course, we are Christians, and can enjoy the advantage which that better training has given, just as the favored son of a king may enjoy his special advantages and yet admit that the less favored are also sons. The name of Christianity only ceases to excite respect when it is used to represent any false or exclusive claims, or when it takes the place of the older and grander words, "Religion" and "Virtue." When we fully comprehend the sympathy of religions we shall deal with other faiths on fairer terms. We shall cease trying to free men from one superstition by inviting them into another.

Missionaries from Inside *vs.* Those from Outside.

The true missionaries are men inside each religion who have outgrown its limitations. But no Christian missionary has ever yet consented to meet the man of other religions upon the common ground of Theism. In Bishop Heber's time, the Hindoo reformer Swaamee Narain was teaching purity and peace, the unity of God, and the abolition of caste. Many thousands of men followed his teachings, and whole villages and districts were raised from the worst immorality by his labors, as the Bishop himself bears witness. But the good Bishop seems to have despaired of him as soon as Swaamee Narain refused conversion to Christianity, making the objection that God was not incarnated in one man, but in many. Then there was Ram Mohun Roy, sixty years ago, who argued from the Vedas against idolatry, caste, and the burning of widows. He also refused to be called a Christian, and the missionaries denounced him. Now comes Keshub Chunder Sen, with his generous utterances: "We profess the universal and absolute religion, whose cardinal doctrines are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and which accepts the truths of all scriptures, and honors the prophets of all nations." The movement reaches thousands whom no foreign influence could touch; yet the Methodist missionaries denounce it in the name of Christ. It is the same with our treatment of the Jews. According to Bayard Taylor, Christendom converts annually three or four Jews in Jerusalem, at a cost of $20,000 each; and yet the reformed Jews in America have already gone in advance of the most liberal Christian sects in their width of religious sympathy. "The happiness of man," says Rabbi Wise, speaking for them, "depends on no creed and no book; it depends on the dominion of truth, which is the Redeemer and Savior, the Messiah and the King of Glory."

A Religion and *the* Religion.

It is our happiness to live in a time when all religions are at last outgrowing their mythologies, and emancipated men are stretching out their hands to share together "the luxury of a religion that does not degrade." The progressive Brahmos of India, the Mohammedan students in London, the Jewish radicals in America, are teaching essentially the same principles, seeking the same ends, with the most enlightened Christian reformers. The Jewish congregations in Baltimore were the first to contribute for the education of the freedmen; the Buddhist temple in San Francisco was the first edifice of that city draped in mourning after the murder of President Lincoln; the Parsees of the East sent contributions to the Sanitary Commission. The great re-

ligions of the world are but larger sects; they come together, like the lesser sects, for works of benevolence; they share the same aspirations, and every step in the progress of each brings it nearer to all the rest. For most of us in America, the door out of superstition and sin may be called Christianity; that is our historical name for it; it is the accident of a birthplace. But other nations find other outlets; they must pass through their own doors, not through ours; and all will come at last upon the broad ground of God's providing, which bears no man's name. The reign of heaven on earth will not be called the Kingdom of Christ or of Buddha,—it will be called the Church of God, or the Commonwealth of Man. I do not wish to belong to *a* religion only, but to *the* religion; it must not include less than the piety of the world.

If one insists on being exclusive, where shall he find a home? What hold has any Protestant sect among us on a thoughtful mind? They are too little, too new, too inconsistent, too feeble. What are these children of a day compared with that magnificent Church of Rome, which counts its years by centuries, and its votaries by millions, and its martyrs by myriads; with kings for confessors and nations for converts; carrying to all the earth one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and claiming for itself no less title than the Catholic, the Universal? Yet in conversing with Catholics one is again repelled by the comparative juvenility, and modernness, and scanty numbers of their church. It claims to be elder brother of our little sects, doubtless, and seems to have most of the family fortune. But the whole fortune is so small! and even the elder brother is so young! The Romanist himself ignores traditions more vast than his own, antiquity more remote, a literature of piety more grand. His temple suffocates: give us a shrine still wider; something than this Catholicism more catholic; not the Church of Rome, but of God and Man; a Pantheon, not a Parthenon; the true *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus;* the Religion of the Ages, Natural Religion.

I was once in a Portuguese cathedral when, after the three days of mourning, in Holy Week, came the final day of Hallelujah. The great church had looked dim and sad, with the innumerable windows closely curtained, since the moment when the symbolical bier of Jesus was borne to its symbolical tomb beneath the High Altar, while the three mystic candles blazed above it. There had been agony and beating of cheeks in the darkness, while ghostly processions moved through the aisles, and fearful transparencies were unrolled from the pulpit. The priests kneeled in gorgeous robes, chanting, with their heads resting on the altar steps; the multitude hung expectant on their words. Suddenly burst forth a new chant, "Gloria in Excelsis!" In that instant every curtain was rolled aside, the cathedral was bathed in glory, the organs clashed, the bells chimed, flowers were thrown from the galleries, little birds were let loose, friends embraced and greeted one another, and we looked down upon a tumultuous sea of faces, all floating in a sunlit haze. And yet, I thought, the whole of this sublime transformation consisted in letting in the light of day! These priests and attendants, each stationed at his post, had only removed the darkness they themselves had made. Unveil these darkened windows, but remove also these darkening walls; the temple itself is but a lingering shadow of that gloom. Instead of its stifling incense, give us God's pure air, and teach us that the broadest religion is the best.

Children of men! the unseen Power, whose eye
  Forever doth accompany mankind,
Hath looked on no religion scornfully
  That men did ever find.

Which has not taught weak wills how much they can!
  Which has not fallen on the dry heart like rain!
Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man,
  Thou must be born again!

Children of men! not that your age excel
  In pride of life the ages of your sires,
But that *ye* think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well,
  The Friend of man desires.

—*Matthew Arnold.*

Our "Church-Door Pulpit" hints its purpose in its name. It aims to furnish fortnightly a transfigured tract,—transfigured by being paid for, and by representing not so much a given system of beliefs as the emphasis, in somewhat varying beliefs, on "Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion;" this tract to be taken from the rack or table at the church-door to the home, there to serve its little mission by reading in the family, lending to a neighbor, mailing to a distant friend, etc. We hope the plan may be destined to wide adoption by Liberal churches as part of their regular church-work.

The word "UNITY" in the title bears to the Committee who arrange the series a wide meaning, pointing more to the substance, than to the forms, of religious thought and faith; and in inviting contributions they have sought, not only through the whole range, but in both directions beyond the range, of those who bear the "Unitarian" name,—though most of the writers must naturally be found within that name. "New Orthodoxy," "New Judaism," those who care for no name but "Religion," and the "Ethical Societies," will all be represented. The choice of subject is left to the writers; and *each writer is responsible for his own utterance alone, and for nothing else in the series.* "One of your best—a life-helping sermon, or a thought-sermon reaching the life," was the invitation sent out.

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THE "CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT"

NEW FURNISHED FOR NEXT YEAR.

The second year of the "CHURCH DOOR PULPIT" begins in April, and the preachers that are to preach the fortnightly sermon in it are gathering. The series of twenty sermons will differ from last year's in two respects. Four numbers will be devoted respectively to

Channing, Parker, Emerson, Martineau,

giving a score or two of what in each writer may be called his "*Gospel passages.*" If one would learn in short space for what the four great prophets of our Liberal Faith stand, let him read these numbers; and keep them on hand to give a friend. If these four pamphlets do not furnish "Scripture readings" for the *pulpit* also, it will be a surprise.

In three more numbers the subjects

"God," "Miracles," "The Bible,"

will be respectively treated in extracts from several writers. Each of these three pamphlets will be, as it were, a handful of short liberal tracts on its special subject.

The other thirteen numbers will probably be single sermons from as many preachers,—preachers ranging in their thought from Liberal Orthodoxy to the Society for Ethical Culture; most of them finding a home, therefore, under the Unitarian name. To announce the broad religious fellowship, the "unity without uniformity" of faith, implied in such pulpit comradeship,—to announce and emphasize and further that, is one purpose for which the CHURCH-DOOR PULPIT as well as UNITY was started; it is one purpose which itself started "Unitarianism." The independence of each writer is guarded by the note printed on his sermon, that he is responsible for his own alone, and for nothing else in the series. The list, alphabetically arranged, stands:

Felix Adler,
C. A. Bartol,
Stopford A. Brooke,
Phillips Brooks,
John W. Chadwick,
Rowland Connor,
Washington Gladden,
T. W. Higginson,
S. H. Sonneschein.
John C. Learned,
Andrew P. Peabody,
Minot J. Savage,
John Snyder,

The hope is that our churches, West and East, will catch the new church-habit, to *regularly and freely furnish forth a table or shelf near the door with such pamphlets*, first for home reading and then for lending and mailing, *each reader becoming his own missionary society for whatever he finds worthy.* It is found that a minute's "prelude" from the minister, describing the "Church-Door" sermon for the day and its preacher, interests the people in it and him, and usually causes the table to be swept of its thirty, forty or fifty copies. But much of the people's interest depends upon this prelude-habit. To make his dumb colleague do good work the minister must treat him heartily.

Of course some of the sermons will be more liked than others, and be better fitted for mission service. If now and then, among the twenty, one contradicts words spoken at the other end of the church, what then? The note on each pamphlet explains the matter; and, if necessary, the "prelude" can explain it farther. But it should be remembered that these sermons, departing somewhat from our thought, are the very ones which best preach our Gospel of Religious Fellowship, which show we *mean* it.

In this way nearly 30,000 "Church-Door Pulpit" sermons have been distributed more or less widely this past year, mainly in the west. Probably nothing like so many tracts could have been circulated here in any other way. And probably no better way can be devised of making each church, East and West, a little "Propaganda" society of our Faith and Principles. Everybody knows *one* person who would like to read what *he* likes. Anybody will hand or mail one tract. And this local and post-office Propaganda is much more likely to enlist members and interest the church at large, if the work is allowed to cost them a trifle, than if it costs them nothing. A tract *paid for* is almost redeemed! Paid for by one of its receivers and on-speeders instead of by some Society, it is "twice blessed,—it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Each Church that subscribes $25 for a block of fifty copies and uses them thoroughly through individual readers, as here suggested, besides any good done in its own homes, sends out twenty times fifty, or one thousand tracts a year, to spread the Liberal Faith—a little mission well worth adding regularly to any church-life.

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